SHAKER COLLECTION

Item 347 c

Bound volume of letters and other documents, 1825-36 and undated, primarily between Shakers at New Lebanon and Watervliet, N.Y., Pleasant Hill, Ky., Canterbury, N.H., and Union Village, Ohio. Correspondents include Solomon [?King], John Dunlavy, Matthew [?Houston], Seth [?Y. Wells], Rufus [?Bishop], and others

347 c.
PAPERS
OF
SHAKERS
OHIO
Union Village

Respected E Solomon. To thee I address the subsequent lines and thou mayest do with them as seemeth to thee good. a task hath been given me with I can comply only in the following contracted mode— I have read Eleazer's manuscripts and am well pleased with them, for I verrily think his alterations tend to perspicuity and a real betterment in point of consistency one part with another— his title page making a difference betwixt the testimony of christ and its attendant evidences— I dearly love — for Father's testimony. & our battlings reasonings comments & upon doctrines are two things — for whilst the one must be preserved entire & uncontaminated forever — the other may shift with the times and circumstances of things— I am also well pleased with the transposition talked of— I have given a general attention to the notes and proposed alterations — and think them excellent & worthy of special attention— I do candidly think that Father hath the right to amend the Testimony Book as seemeth to him good— and I do confidently know that in many things Father's light & minds far ahead of many things herein stated— and therefore I judge that Father ought to have the honour and privilege of correcting it himself, or by his order

And if Bro. Eleazer is laid under sufficient bonds and at the same time made sufficiently free I then shall believe that he can do a great and good work altho his labours may be confined to quite small matters. These remarks I have made upon the manuscripts noted which I now send thee— In hopes that they may be committed to Eleazer to be made use of as Father may direct, for depend on it Eleazer is determined to keep his fingers out of the fire unless some one in authority giveth him the command

It is true that Father dreads & may justly dread the interested critic is partially among the Believers - But in my Judgment the main part of the intended alterations will never be noticed at all by the 9-tenths of the Believers - and among those who do notice them and are Judges of propriety - not one in ten of them but must approve - so that if I may Judge in the case at all - I Judge that Eleazer may well be intrusted with the editing business under Father - for I do verily believe that he will steer along a middle & safe way that will give as little offence & alarm as possible and at the sametime - come out the most honourable in the issue to the Authors of the book and the Society at large - And now if I was sure that what I have prepared above would meet the mind of the Ministry it would at once supersede the necessity of any farther criticisms or notes from me - for Bro. Eleazer is in possession of the major part of them already - But inasmuch as I can easily note down all that I have thought of special importance - I shall do so - and submit them to the strictures of the Ministry

1. I cannot but cordially disapprobate & call in question the propriety of applying scriptures which relate only to the moral Law or Gospel of Xt to commandments pursuits merely carnal - as that stated in the first Edition page - 35th - and in the 25th verse - saying that the Laws of nature were eternal - and did man send the most solemn obligations &c also in the same Chapt Sec 128th - verse - The Law & commandment which God gave to man was in itself eternal - holy Just & good - Thus in the 131st v. - said to be in itself spiritual whereas it was in itself carnal and no spirituality in it all - But what is amazing See verse - 132nd - This Law of nature again

said be eternal, is ordained only to stand
until the true Spiritual seed should come &
how then could it be eternal? and unfortunately
see in 15th v. of the same chapt. this pure
Law of nature above sd to be eternal is
placed equally in the Brutal creation
was in the beginning holy Just & good - and
yet see in the 16th v. of the same Chr it is
sd that said Law of nature is Inferior to
the Law of Grace - but how could it be so
if both were eternal? - Now ~~Eleazer~~
the above are the most cardinal points I wanted
altered and as for the supplies or substitute
words or sentiments which I wished to be put in
I leave this to better Judges - Eleazer & I have
talked over these things & have agreed as
touching them in general so that I need not say
any thing more on them at present -

There were some smaller matters which I also
thought of - such as - the word Propensity - when
used in relation to an Innocent being - this I have
always considered improper - A fallen crea-
ture may have a propensity towards cer-
tain gratifications but not an innocent being -

Gen. 4. verse 64.

In one place - see page 32. 4th chapt. 1st verse - God
is said to be the author of all the sensations passions
and affections - But in another place to which
I have referred Bro. Eleazer - It is expressly
denyed - But that the sensations passions and
affections originate from outward objects
in which we behold either beauty or deformity &c

Thus ~~Eleazer~~ I have written all
I have leasure to write - for scarcely could
I write this being interrupted 6 - or 8 times
& poor Richard Pitham is in the room with
me being sick - I am afraid he will not live
long. he hath puked blood plentifully & yet spits

Matthew

Elder Solomon

Meeting House

(141

1. Tim. 4-3- Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth. The words and commanding are an unwarrantable supplyment, and only became necessary because of the wrong translation of the word which rendered forbiding- which signifies to bind down to so that the passage truly reads: binding to marry, to abstain from those meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth: It appears that the meats which they should bind to abstain from, were such as Paul could not minister to the Gentile Communion Novitiates, because they were not able to receive it; being so lustfully that they must marry or commit fornication so that the binding to marry, & to abstain from meats, is perfectly consistent the one with the other— and that the meats were such as above stated- will appear from the following considerations- That God had ordained created those meats which for those who believed & knew the truth- Now know that litteral meats for eating & drinking were made for & used by all indiscriminately whether they believed & knew the truth or not

But the spiritual meats of which Paul spake and which Jesus signified, when he said, my flesh is meat indeed & my blood is drink indeed, which he explained to be his spirit & life- I say those meats which were neither more nor less than the life of continuing which Jesus & Paul knew could not be received by any save such as believed & knew the truth- neither could they be prohibited by any but such as bound to marry & live in the

carnal works of the flesh - rejecting the life and example of the Xt - And these can be none else save the Protestants, who when they had the power actually did forbid all vows of continency or single life or in other words bound to marry, and to abstain from the life, example and spirit of Xt. which is meat indeed & drink indeed - I have meat to eat said Jesus that ye know not of - It was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father

Brother Eleazer - I cannot know that any thing novel will strike thy mind in the above communication. But last Fall at Erie on a certain occasion something a little novel & somewhat interesting came up to mine, I dropped the idea to Richard & told him as he had a pen & Ink to register it - and this is a correct transcript from the prototype - Thy judgment is desired -

Matthew

The Greek word Holio in all certainty [illegible] Did anciently mean to confine or to bind and no where is used as for a Bed but with the interpretation above given. The light is increasing Rev. Extra not for To good Elder Matthew if I [illegible] clear and his little notes, in reflection [illegible] With kind Love & union to good Brethren

Bro. Miller I'd like good to hear what Henry relates How he has enjoyed the Camp Meeting Dyering those meets which adjourned all in Tremont who have [illegible] See Heb 13. 9. 10.

To for Rit is to bind. or confine. Num 11:28. My God Moses bind them Mark 9:50. Bind him not. Luke 13:16. Bind him not. Luke 10:57. who can bind or keep back water. 1 Cor. 16 39. Bind not. 3 John 10. Bindeth them that murder. binding or obeying in baptism to the gentiles by them existing the word. 1 Thess. 2. 16. binding or obeying to Mary. to be kept off from those meats, which are ordained for them which expect and keep them in low from [illegible] For we have an altar of which they have no right to eat [illegible] tabernacle.

Union Village. June 1825

Brother Thine by Col. R Hale I have just received and hastily read over & have only time to sketch down a few superficial Remarks. For I am fixing every day now for a decampment far to the North East on the margin of Lake Erie. The first enquiry those make is relative to the health of Father He is almost miraculously well comfortable & serene considering his situation - he hath eaten almost nothing at all for many weeks; last week E. Solloman told me that he was sure Father had not eaten in four weeks, as much as he usually eat at one Meal and yet his strength is surprising - but he grows weaker and weaker daily - of course we cannot calculate upon his long stay with us & Thine - & Thine the actual strength of the faith & subjection of many will be tryed - I for my part shall as well because I shall be obedient to God's Joshua but I have said enough on this subject — Now as to those critical points of enquiry suggested in thy Letter I ought really to be excused saying any thing special upon them for I am no critick neither the son of a critick

and even should it be admitted that I had originally a faculty for such research - yet still it remaineth a stubborn fact that I have had but little time, or opportunity for it. I have attending a little to thy criticisms on Heb. 7. 18. 19 - I like them pretty well tho somewhat novel, never having seen Griesbach - The thing is to find out what was the matter of fact - Did the Law bring in the better hope, by which either we, or the fathers drew or drew near to God? Or was it not rather the introduction to the better hope by which we drew nearer to God? And was it not thus the medium of the Law as a schoolmaster that all its disciples, or scholars were brought unto Xt? -

But a word upon (1. Tim - 2. 13) criticisms - I am much pleased with thy remarks on this text - I had heard substantially the same Ideas of this latter than a year since Severalius undoubtedly will justify such a rendering of the little word dia in a genetive connection. It is true Brother Dan. I suppose those are not apprised) that one of the late translations - perhaps Wakefield or Newcome - Insist on it that - dia tes teknogonias - is an interpolation - not having been found in a sufficient number of undeniable manuscripts - If this could be certainly ascertained - then we might save ourselves the trouble of such nice criticisms - But Query - what objection would'st thou have to the following Ideas suggested to me by one not long since? That the matter of fact was, that in that day as well as now, Women

in a state of (cg) gestation felt themselves under the woe and were therefore in great perplexity about the issue - to which Paul addressed those encouraging words - saying that they should be prevented (so to speak) thro Child birth - note the births of children in the plural - But child birth - i.e. that they might confidently expect God's preserving notice & care of them even thro that critical & trying juncture especially should they (i.e. husband & wife) not stay only - continue in faith in Love - in holiness with sobriety -

Now Bro one reflection more as almost a necessary result of the foregoing elaborate disquisitions - I am exceeding glad that the more sure than all those typographical Epistles hath come unto us - We certainly do live in the breaking of eternal day wherein all those types shadows & predictions, delivered in all preceeding & preparatory dispensations either have, or are about to receive their accomplishment - & I am of it persuaded - for anti - hath not only sought to change times - but Laws - i.e. the very true & holy writings - including no doubt also the living Laws or living testimony of xt in that day - Bro of these inaccuracies I am in haste & I perhaps I am writing to my friend John Matthews

N.B. Q. do receive my last with & love Thos
But did I give you it by the hand Winthrop and Thos
to whom was it? Q. when I called for the
I am going to stay Q. about Q days! yrs.

Rev. John Dunlavy

Pleasant hill

[redacted]

Kentucky

[redacted]

New Lebanon January 29. 1835.

Beloved Ministry,

You are almost continually on our minds, day and night, and we feel with you and for you, knowing that you as well as Bs Daniel and Stephen are almost constantly wading in deep waters and passing through strait places where you would feel thankful to any soul who would take the responsibility and tell you what to do; and no doubt but you now consider obedience to be a far lighter burden than to decide in difficult cases, and so do we, Nevertheless we feel in duty bound to render you as much assistance as we can consistant with our ability & circumstances. But you must know, that altho' we are well acquainted with the spiritual and temporal order of Believers, generally, yet we cannot tell what the people can bear, at so great a distance, so well as you who are so well acquainted with their faith and circumstances.

We believe you understand the foundation principles of order sufficiently to lay a good foundation both in the Spiritual and temporal departments. But the important point will be for the people to see the order as you do and feel the necessity of laying a good foundation, by "making all things according to the pattern shewn in the mount". And it appears to us impossible for a good foundation to be laid at Union Village without a great sacrifice and we may say a universal cross! But what of all that? Shall we flinch at any crosses which are necessary to establish the order of the gospel, and insure permanent peace & salvation?

We feel a great deal of Charity for our brethren & sisters in Ohio, especially since we have become measurably acquainted with their situation and circumstances, under which the righteous have groaned for 10 or 11 years past. Sometimes we wonder how they have stood their ground so well; and above all, why we have been kept so long in ignorance of such important matters! But there will be no gain in feeding on those back matters, it is far worse than lost time - as well might the people think of living on the food which they had eaten years ago. What is necessary now, is, to face about the right way, and go ahead, leaving those things that are behind, cancelling all past offences or trials one with another and with those who have heretofore stood as watchmen; and if they are faithful to forgive one another, God will forgive their trespasses.

But since it is the gift to leave the things that are behind and press forward, we will do so, and inform you about things present and future such as you want to hear about - particularly whether that very interesting and intelligible letter from the pen of our beloved Bs Joshua has been rec'd - Whether we approbate the changes necessary to be made, being brought about while Bs Dan'l & Stephen are with you. Whether Elder Solomon has any expectation of returning to that country or not, - and whether you may look for Elder David's return or whether you may look for another. All these questions will be answered in their turn.

And firstly, We will inform you that Bs Joshua's letter to E Bs David was rec'd on Friday the 22d inst. & was much admired on account of its being clear & intelligible and comprehending much on a small space. Any how, it brought you all so near, that some of us could see how you all look not even excepting sister Joanna. We had almost become impatient to receive the letter, for Elder Bs had told us that Bs Joshua would write. However E. Brother rec'd it in a favorable time - friday evening while the Elders and we were supporting union together, as you know is our practice 3 times in a week. You ask, if it is possible for us to have any idea of your feeling Bs Joshua and situation in these trying times - the heart-aching - heavy-bearing, and the lonely sleepless nights, and whether there is no help for lonely me! Yea dear Bs we have an idea of your situation and pity you in our hearts, but be not discouraged, you have embarked in a good cause.

go ahead, and you wile find Eldress Betsey will be ever true to support you in every good work, & so wile sisters nancy and Joanna, Brothers Daniel and Stephen, yea & the Elders too — keep the union pure from and you will be able thro the blessing of God to work wonders, and you will not consider yourself alone but will know that all good in heaven and on earth is on your side, then who can harm you or make you afraid?

Concerning such a number of families in one interest, we never could see the propriety, first nor last, neither did we ever believe you would be able to support it to the satisfaction of all concerned, But as we did not hear of any dissatisfaction till recently, we did not think best to intermeddle in the business, unless we were called on for counsel. E. Br David informed us that it was the general faith and desire of the believers there to pattern after the order which has long been supported here, altho it would require considerable labor & sacrifice in the present times, to bring it about good order in all these things. He further informed us, that you felt some straitened about making the necessary changes before you could hear from us. But it appears, that the brethren Daniel and Stephen have satisfied your minds on that ground, and we conclude, that the change has been made, and we wish the blessing of God & his people to rest upon the undertaking — Be all of your waiting to hear any thing further from us: for all who had gone there knew what would meet our approbation, provided it could be done in union. Furthermore we concluded that the deacons Daniel and Stephen might be a great help in the business, provided the more & division of things were made while they remain at Union village, as they have both had considerable experience in such labors heretofore.

Concerning Elder Solomon or Br. Solomon's future residence, we will just observe, in this place, that he has taken up his abode in the same family where he resided 46 years ago, and from which he went to the west. He lives in a room with Br Eleab Wasbo, Isaac Youngs, Garret Lawrence & Anthony Brewster — attends to the rules and regulations of the family and has, we conclude, resigned, once for all, his office and titles, and relinquished all expectation of returning to union village again. He resigned very fully & handsomely in church-meeting and we think that he gave good satisfaction [to the people here] He seems to acknowledge, that his change is a privilege to him and a releasement from a great burden. Nevertheless he is aware, that the generality will have their thoughts and conjectures concerning the cause or causes of his removal at such a crisis, and will attribute his removal to some moral defect or lack of Wisdom or ability, either of which would throw some dishonor on his character, but he has done very well thus far, for we never hear of his opening his bad feelings in a disorderly manner, & he assures us that he never shall.

Beloved Friends — By this time you feel impatient to hear whether Elder Br. or some other good elder will go out to Union village. Well, then, we will tell you the result of our conscientious & impartial labors. We believe that Elder Brother is very much needed in his own gift here, where we consider, that he may, being somewhat advanced in years, do more good and be useful longer, than he would, were he to return to the west, and as it were begin a new work, when so far past the meridian of life.

This may make you look sober, but never mind that, you will soon look pleasant when we tell you that we have come to the conclusion to lend you our true & worthy friend Br Freegift Wells, who has faithfully discharged the duties of an Elder in the church for the term of about 19 years, and without a blot or stain that we know of. And we do not hesitate to recommend him, as a good man, an office without blemish, and an able counsellor in matters both ohinitical & temporal. Now Br Joshua, if you wish him to have any other recommend, you may inquire of Eldress Betsey, she is the most acquainted with him, But sister Joanna can give a pretty good judgment about him: and so can Br Daniel, Br Stephen

also is a man whose judgment is generally to be depended on, nevertheless these Willcabbon fleshly relations so much that we are afraid he would hardly do Br Freegift justice in this case. But no doubt Br E. Ebazar & Br Andrew will willingly speak a few words in his favor, and many others will when they get acquainted. We believe Br Freegift can do more good there than any person that can be spared, and it seemed nearly impossible to spare him, and has already caused many tears, for he is much depended on spiritually & temporally. We expect, Bro Elder Matthew will start soon after the canal opens. They have a feeling to go that way, as they wish to call at Sodus & North Union; and we hope the brethren Daniel & Stephen will stay there until they see Br Freegift & Elder Matthew on the ground.

The society here and at W.P. continue their good health much the same as when Br Dan.l & Stephen left us. No deaths in either society since Salome Spencer about the middle of Sept.r Our last accounts from the eastern societies were encouraging. Anthony & Charles a few weeks since, returned from Buffalo, called at Sodus & brought from thence good news both written & verbal — that they were and some in numbers & were wide awake in the gifts and power of God — They wrote that nearly every young person under 20 years & or 6, years were subjects of the mighty power of God. Shaking, jerking, & bowing back & forward, so that their heads would nearly touch the floor. If the songs were never so steady and orderly their operations would unite with them to the astonishment of the spectators, some of whom acknowledged it to be the power of God — But we must reserve this small space for the best gift, that is LOVE. Do take our best love & blessing & the best love & blessing of all the Elders, Deacons, Brethren & Sisters, for we are authorized to send for the whole and we want Elder Sarah Betsey should, like a kind mother, see that every good Believer has their portion and be sure to give a good share to Br Malcom. tell him to hold fast unto the end, that no one take his crown.

The Ministry.

New Lebanon Columbia Cty New york

Respected Brother. I am just up from W.P. where I have been for 3 weeks — the Ministry being there & hearing just now seated myself by the stove I heard a voice say my write; but said what shall I write? Several weeks have now elapsed, since I left my beloved friends in the west, and the ensuing passage was swift & my anxiety great to reach my brethren in the east & yet scarcely so for one hour could I shut you entirely out, & it remains in a measure as yet — for as yet I have had no pleasing developments of matters & things in that region, especially of spiritual matters, the prosperity of which above all things I desire; To hear of your increase of love, unity, subjection & obedience, fire my soul with joy & thanksgiving. My solicitude on this subject has been much enlarged since I came to this place: I include W.P. for elsewhere I have not visited much. Yet I say my anxiety has been on the increase since I came here, and now hear the reason why. I have found a blessed, holy & happy people, in these two societies, consisting of about 1000 souls, of men, women, youth & children whose unity & love to that blessed gospel which you & I heard, believed & entered to obey, but alas in point of obedience we have been too remiss, tho all important. Hearing, be sure is necessary, for faith comes by it — Faith is necessary, because without it we could not please God, for we should not be able to endure those sufferings which are necessary to destroy the man of sin. But after all, doing the will of God or obedience to faith is that which carries to the attainment. Here I see this exemplified to my great satisfaction. The truth is obeyed, and that in more universality here than I had any idea of, but yet I would not be understood as saying, that every individual among them is spotless, or have arrived at the zenith of perfection

for there are some youth and children and some of riper years who are yet learning the way of God between these are the subjects of good order & government, which government is manifestly founded on love according to well known laws, which laws or orders are well understood by every disciple and strictly obeyed by the governing party themselves, which by the way is about all there is of what is a theocracy or a govt of God among men, all these laws or orders appear to be simple, plain & intelligible the self evident results of the gospel and are necessary to be observed and spontaneously obeyed by every faithful & successful disciple of mother's gospel. ———

These remarks I have made on the most careful & disinterested examination, At present I shall say nothing more on this subject, only this that I never was surrounded or overwhelmed with so much unfeigned love & kindness in all my life — Be assured that there is nothing but a high shining nature or the flesh, or selfishness or in one word sin, that does, will or can separate us from God, The city is low, in a low place, God dwells in that city, namely Zion, and whosoever enters city must come down & bow very low or not enter nor find it at all.

O Br could you only have stood with me at W. V. and beheld the spirit which there presented in morning meeting you would certainly have said with me "God is among the people of a truth" such humiliation, such weeping, such union & love, zeal & such sympathy for the western Believers I never witnessed before, At my request & their own free will, they labored a song or two for the western Believers with great power and then bowed themselves in great humiliation & devoutly prayed for God's blessing to rest upon you all! O who could have witnessed such a display as I did, how what scene & not have wept, yea more, he must have been filled with confidence that such humiliation & prayers would be noticed of God, & you would all be blessed who desired it. — But why should I speak of W. V. alone, the same prevails in the east country where, even at Sodus bay, I understand by letter that there, great conviction, humiliation & prevails, and that the genuine Holy Ghost greatly prevails among them. O who that has ever felt the power of God, can live without it, But, I must close my paper is done you will be helped in the spring — God bless you all — All here send love to you all, My love to E. Bixby. and all with her. Matthew

Elder Solomon's Resignation.

First Order— New Lebanon January 20th 1836

In our meeting this evening a letter was read from Elder Benjamin S. Youngs, informing us of the death of Eldress Molly Goodrich, at South Union on the morning of the 19th ultimo. After the reading, Elder Brother David M. made some remarks confirming the faithfulness of the deceased, that she had finished her work honorably &c. He then observed that several who went out to the West, had returned; & he considered, that those who went in obedience & labored for the good of souls there, and had returned in obedience in obedience, were as honorable in their return as they were in going out. They were honorable in their obedience to the gift that was for them, and so was every soul that walked in obedience to the gift that was for them, let their calling or lot be at home or abroad &c.&c.. He then invited Elder Solomon to manifest his fellings if he felt any to say.

Accordingly he came forward and observed that he had ben absent from this place a long time, full 30 years; it having fallen to his lot to labor for the good of souls in the West, and for the upbuilding of the cause in that part of the vineyard of Christ. And during these 30 years it had been his labour to conduct in all all cases, according to the best wisdom given him, for the good of all. He had been called to labor for the good of all the societies in the West, but especially & more immediately for that at Union Village; & in every case & with every society it had been his labour to do justice, & conduct according the gospel in all things. He had passed through much labour, tribulation & persecutions for 30 years past, and in looking back upon the whole, he could not say that he found aught whereof to accuse himself. But he had labored according to his best understanding and that small measure of wisdom that had been given him to do good to all, and help build up the cause of the gospel in the West. For several years past, there seemed to be a lack in the societies at the West, of that oneness of spiritual union & joining to the foundation or centre

of unions here

of Union here that was necessary for the support & protection of the branches there, as we are all called to be joined as branches of one vine; consequently soon had come. It seemed not to be the gift to have much communication only by letter – not much if any visiting and living communication and ministrations from the east to the west. Latterly however, the way had been opened for more correspondence, and living ministrations sent out by the wisdom & in the gift of God, which he had no doubt would be productive of much good to the people in the West. A change was greatly needed, in the manners, customs, rules and regulation of the people in the west; and wisdom had directed that there should be a new and living ministration, direct and fresh from the fountain, to bring the people forward into a nearer relation to the centre; that they might be more like the ~~same~~ one people in all things. This important and necessary work was begun by Brother Rufus & Isaac, the way was broke & the door opened by them; and last season by an increasing gift Elder Brother David & those who went with him were sent by the leading gift in the church here, to be a help to the people there; and he doubted not that it was all conducted in wisdom, and would be productive of a great deal of good to the people there; it was such a gift as was much needed there. He said the brethren & sisters might think strange why it was that he was away from there at this important crisis, but he would willingly inform them. When Elder Brother came to the West with a new and fresh ministration, right from the foundation, it seemed necessary that he should have a full gift to the people, with nothing to obstruct or hinder his ministration direct to the people, and it felt right & reasonable & altogether for the best, for him (ie Solomon) to withdraw and come home for a season, that those who had been in the work in the east for 30 years since the first messengers went to the west, should visit the people, and instruct them in the gospel as it is now in the church, and in the orders, rules, manners and habits as now practised in the church at this place, that they might have a privilege to receive a gift right fresh from the fountain, the centre of union to all believers in the land. And since Elder Brother's return, (which he did not look for so soon at the time he left) The good ministry had given him the privilege, ~~&~~ after a long absence of 30 years to stay at home. This good home, one that he had always claimed as his home, as his father's & mother's house. And now brethren & sisters, I say beloved elders brethren & sisters, I want you to make room in your hearts and feelings for me to stay and labor to be one of the obedient little ones with you. And I desire & crave your love & your

union

union, & blessing, just as far as works and faithfulness may merit & no farther. I want to be one of Mothers little children, I have no faith in great big brethren & sisters, and it shall be my labour to be one of the little ones. I consider it a great privilege for me to be released from so much burden, and to have nothing to do but to take care of me, and labour for my own soul.

I went out in obedience and I have returned in obedience to the gift in the Ministry, and to them I have resigned myself, and my title of Elder, & I desire to be called by name, Solomon. Be assured brethren & sisters the change is very great, to be released from so much burden, after so long a labour of 30 years, to have the privilege to return again to my good home; the releasment is is very great. And what would be the harm if all those who have been out to the West should return again, after having laboured there untile their gift is expended? I say what would be the harm, if all should return again?

The foregoing was the substance of what was said, tho not verbatim, as it was penned after meeting from memory. After he had done speaking the brethren & sisters made him welcome in a little song, altho he had been stationed in the family most of the time since he came from the West. Finding this may give some idea of the state of his mind we have concluded to send it to the ministry, submitting the circulation to your discretion and wisdom.

In union & in behalf of the

Ministry

Rufus.

Waterviet July 11th 1827.

Beloved & respected Ministry,

The communication sent by Elder Benjamin on the subject of the Church Covenant, has been examined and, as to the main substance, is much approved of by the Ministry & Elders. But having been written in haste and, as Brother Eleazar suggested, they think it should be well matured if it is intended to be put in print, as there are many keen-eyed eagles & vultures among lawyers & statesmen, who will doubtless take every possible advantage to pick at it, & by it to tear & rend the Covenant itself. The Ministry therefore think it important to have all due consideration bestowed upon it, and to have whatever amendments & improvements can be suggested here, made in it— and for the better security of conveyance, they propose to have it retained till Elder B's return— They suppose it cannot materially affect the Chh at Union Village if a revision of their Cov.t should not take place till after that time. I am therefore directed to give this notice to the Chh at U.V. and to address my letter to the Ministry, as it is uncertain whether Br. Eleazar will be there at the time of its arrival. One point in particular I am desired to notice at present. It is stated among other duties of the Trustees, that they are required to make all <u>lawful defense</u> for the protection & security of the interest of the Chh. In so doing they have power to go to the utmost extent of the law, and might, in such a case, go further than true wisdom would justify— Some brethren, understanding their legal rights, would naturally be inclined to take as much advantage of the words in law, as the law would allow them, & might thereby dishonor the pacific character of the Chh. We would therefore chuse to say;— "make <u>all just & equitable defense by law</u>, so far as may be consistent with the faith & principles of the Church," or, "of the gospel."

The Ministry are here at present, and expect to return to ... tomorrow. Elder Benjamin & his companions are now on a visit ... eastward, and when they will return, is rather uncertain - They left ... N.L. in good health on the 22d of June, for Hancock, & expected to pro... ceed on to Springham & Enfield. It is a general time of health ... and at N.L. and as far as we can learn, in the eastern societies. ... the Deacons from New Hampshire started from our office this ... ing on their return home by the way of Newlebanon.

The Ministry send their kind love to the Ministry at W. ... And as I feel a portion of the same love I desire you would accep...

Se...

Eleazar Wright or Archibald Meacham,

Union Village (near Lebanon)

Warren County, Ohio.

(69)

(75) New Lebanon Dec. 30th 1829.

Dearly beloved brother Eleazar,

Your letter addressed to me from North Union, and also that addressed to the Ministry soon after your arrival at Union Village, were both duly & thankfully received, and read with much satisfaction. We thought best to defer writing till we received returns from the eastern Societies, that sufficient time might be allowed for the circulation & examination of the Covenant by those concerned, that we might thereby learn what objections could be made, and what amendments, if any, were proposed. By returns lately received from all the societies, except in the state of Maine, we find that the Circular was well received in every place, and the Covenant highly approved. But after much investigation & due consideration in the society here, we have found it expedient & necessary to make a few amendments before we transcribe it for execution. We will state the amendments, with some of our reasons for them, so that you may see the sense entertained among us respecting the particulars referred to. The following amendment, or rather addition, was made about the time you went away, but whether it was inserted ~~inserted~~ in your copy I do not now recollect.

Art. I. Sec. 3. at the close. Such appointments being officially communicated to all concerned, and receiving the general approbation of the Church, are confirmed & supported in the Society. Art. II. Sec. 2. for the words, "no person in debt, or under any obligations of service," write, no person under any legal involvement, or obligations of service; — Same Section, after the words, "no profane person" write, nor any person who lives in the wilful violation of the known & acknowledged principles of moral conduct, shall be deemed fit. The reasons for these amendments will appear obvious when we consider that a good Believer may formerly have been involved in debt, & been legally discharged by the insolvent laws, or the debts may be outlawed; yet, in gospel truth, he must be considered still in debt, but under no legal involvement. In such case it will be hard to deny him the privileges of a Covenant relation, when he is in all other respects worthy of it. Again, respecting the moral qualifications, we may find many individuals, especially among the junior classes of Believers, who have good faith, & bid fair to make good Believers, provided they are kept under the protection of the gospel; yet being full of nature they often get overcome with it & confess it; of course their Elders, and perhaps many others, know that they do not strictly live up to the precepts of the gospel; and yet all feel willing to extend charity towards & try them. — It must therefore feel hard to shut such ones out of Covenant relation while there is yet hopes of amendment. Again: Sec. 3. in the 3. sentence; ~~instead~~ of "to settle all claims" &c. insert just and equitable after the word "all" Because claims may be made by malicious creditors, which are not just & equitable.

Art. III. Sec. 5. It would be well to have a form of a Declaration of Trust, to go in the matter with the copy of the Covenant to distant Societies. I have lately rec'd a letter from

the east, requesting an explanation of this Declaration, as the object of it seems to be fully comprehended by some there.

Art. IV. Sec. 1. For "blameless character," write good understanding, also cancel the words, "wisdom and" — These amendments are deemed important, because, in the estimation of some, a blameless character is not easily found even among Believers — and unreconciled members will ever be ready to charge blame and lack of wisdom to the best of Elders; and apostates will be ready to make a handle of these requisite qualifications, to charge the Society with breaking their own Covenant by supporting people in office who do not in all points exactly possess the qualifications required by the Covenant — For the same reason it is thought best to erase the "meekness, patience" in the 2. Section.

Art. V. Sec. 1. For the reasons above mentioned, it is thought best to erase some of the qualifications in the 2. sentence of this section, viz. the words "honest, upright, just, impartial and" — also the words, "examples of economy, neatness and good order; peace-makers among their brethren and sisters," Tho these qualifications are all necessary, & ought to be enjoined upon every Believer; yet it is considered a point of wisdom to keep them out of the written Covenant, which, if brought before a Court of law, might be attended with very evil consequences.

Concerning the little scrap you sent me from Watervliet, we have taken it into consideration & formed a section as follows; Art. VI. Sec. 5. "As we esteem the mutual possession & enjoyment of the consecrated interest & privileges of the Church a valuable consideration, fully adequate to any amount of personal interest, labor or service, devoted or consecrated by any individual, so we consider that no ground of action is or can be afforded for the recovery of any property or service devoted & consecrated as aforesaid: And we agree, that in case any member or members shall remove from one family, society or branch of the Church to another, his, her or their signature or signatures to the Church Covenant shall forever stand good against all charges on either side." This Section we have entitled, No ground of action against the Church, even in case of removals. Elder Calvin thinks that something of the nature of this Section ought to go into every Covenant, whether of Church or family order.

We have not yet executed the New Covenant here; but expect to do it some time in January, probably not before the middle of the month. I have been obliged to write in haste, as our Ministry have just rec. a letter from the Ministry at Union Village & wished to answer it immediately. I can only add my kind love & prayers for your blessing & prosperity.

Seth.

Brother Eleazar Wright,

Union Village, Ohio.

(82)

42
37
36
18
3

Canterbury Merrimack County &c April 26th 1830

To our beloved Elder Eleazar and all concerned, who have received like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, as administered to us through the instrumentality of our blessed Mother.

Dearly Beloved Gospel Friend.

We had for some weeks past been anxiously looking for some communication by mail from our beloved Friends in the West, when we agreeably with our expectation received your very interesting and lovely Letter of March 5th 1830, Mailed Mar 11th on the 29th of March (it arrived in Town on the 25th but was lodged in the wrong P.O. at first) and although it seemed a long time since we saw or heard from you, yet concluding that you must have had many important matters to attend to after your return from the East, your Letter was received nearly as soon as we had anticipated, nor were we led to conclude that you had forgotten us, for we are confident that during our personal interview, such a degree of intercourse and gospel communion was opened & gained that time can never obliterate, nor changes matters or things eradicate, not having barely seen and conversed with one of Mothers children in the west, but through that same chosen vessel was administered to us the general regard, love & gospel feelings of all with whom he stood connected for our prosperity welfare & progress in the gospel which has lightened and strengthened the chords of confederacy among the honest hearted, and rivited the bonds of everlasting love and union among the faithful too firmly to be ever torn asunder.

Although nothing very unusual or extraordinary has occured since you was here, yet your very worthy Letter which seems to invite an answer, containing so much valuable information and expressing such sentiments of Love, thanks and gospel feelings seemed to us more like an echo from the West than the mere thoughts of your mind, and we immediately transmitted a copy of it by mail to Enfield and did not hesitate to give it a general circulation through out, and it having met with such a cordial reception both here and at Enfield, that we in behalf of all the People cannot forbear at least sending our thanks for your Love &c. and making you heartily welcome on our part for all the favors you may have received from this section.

It was very alleviating to hear of the safe return of our good friends home, and that they were so remarkably blessed knowing that they were not out of the possibility of danger on their journey; and it strikes us very

agreeably to hear that western Believers are enjoying prosperity with us, and to hear of any defeat over unprincipled apostates, and we trust that the case now pending will be decided according to its merits, and the issue such as to convince the World that no adversary can prosper against the Lords anointed.

We had previous to receiving your letter noticed a statement in a Massachusetts paper, which informed us of the disastrous accident which happened at N. Union on the 11th of Febry, and stated that three buildings were consumed by fire & an infant perished, and fears were entertained that a good part of the Village was destroyed. However we were happily disappointed and it was a source of consolation to be informed that the loss was no more extensive & confined to so narrow limits.

The Circular Epistle and Covenant have been received here also, have been examined, publickly read and received the universal approbation of the Ministry, Elders, Deacons and all concerned admiring the Instructive & simplicity

With regard to matters in this section it has been a time of general prosperity since you was here; no opposition from without to effect the interests of Believers generally. Some considerable many transient persons have of late united themselves to the Society, & probably some of them will make Believers. We have had very little rain since the first of August last so little that the mills can be hardly kept in operation; nor had we but about 8 or 10 Inches of snow and 4 or 5 Weeks sleighing the past Winter, during which time the weather was extremely cold so cold that the Thermometer stood at 20 Degrees below Zero for several days and at several different times; However, it is very pleasant for the season now & we have a prospect of a fine early spring. We commenced ploughing a fortnight since.

We (the Ministry) are in a general state of health. Father Job is comfortable and has enjoyed a good degree of health since you was here, and generally speaking it has been as healthy in this place for 8 or 10 Months past as was ever known so that there are none confined at this time altho some of the aged Brethren & Sisters have deceased, 5 in number within a few months of old age & general debility, one of whom an aged Sister was 101 Years of age.

Now Beloved Friends we must draw towards a close, by gathering some good gospel feelings to remunerate in some degree for the bountiful ministrations accompanying your Letter. Therein we desire that you would receive our very particular & never failing Love, and our Prayers that the blessings of Heaven may rest upon you, in-

leading Father Job & the rest of the Ministry in particular and to farther effect this object. in
sabbath afternoon meeting, immediately after singing pretty Zealous by the beautiful hymn
The way I go full well I know will take the life of pleasure" the Elders, Deacons, Brethren & Sisters all
unanimously sent their best love & fervent desires to the good Ministry & all the people at Union Village
Elder Isachar, Elder Arch. Elder Matthew & Br. Malcham & as far as you feel to communicate it
& also their love & sincere thanks to Elder Eliazar for the pretty visit he made us last summer, & the
many pretty sons & beautiful hymns that were transcribed from his manuscripts. resting assured that
be informed that we enjoy our social circles undisturbed & repose under our own vine & fig tree must be
source of general consolation to our gospel friends in the West.

We have just received a line from Enfield N. H. which states that the influenza or throat distemper
has prevailed there for a few weeks past, particularly in the first family that the distemper was abating
& they are like to get the better of it. That they were very thankful to hear from the West & to receive the
love &c at a time when they stood so much in need & were visited by such an unwelcome distemper, & in
return the Elders, Deacons, Br.n & sisters all desired their love & thanks might have a place in this letter
& be distributed in like manner with ours. We will now lovingly bid you & Elder Solomon & Eldress
Rachel & the rest of the Ministry & all kindly farewell. From the Ministry at Canterbury.

P.S. Any communication whatever from the West will not be unacceptable, but will meet with
a thankful reception by all (the good old Trustee & smbe included who send their love also)
if it cannot be forwarded further than N Lebanon by first convey ance —

Hymn. I love to sound the praise of God. &c

Shaker Village N.H.
April 25. 1830

Eleazar Wright.
Union Village
Warren County
Ohio
Lebanon Post office.

(114)

New Lebanon Oct. 21st 1830.

Beloved Br Eleazar,

Your letter from U.V. was duly rec.d for which I return you my sincere thanks - I have since seen yours to Elder Nathaniel - It appears by these letters that the Ky. apostates are determ.d to do all the mischief they can under color of law. This & the lawsuits we have had among us, are strong confirmations of Mother Ann's prediction when Believers were harrassed by persecuting mobs in her day. She said the time would come when the wicked, instead of raising persecuting mobs, would make laws to afflict & persecute the people of God, & would proceed in their wicked schemes under the cover of unjust laws. Father Joseph spoke on the same subject a little before his departure, and counselled the Bl.rs to be very careful in their transactions with the world, and be guarded in their writings & contracts, so as to leave no room for the enemy to take advantage by law; for they would use every artifice, he said, & take undue advantage of all the subtleties of the law to injure Bl.rs & overthrow the work of God, if possible. And our late Mother Lucy often counselled Believers to keep low & carry a meek & quiet spirit in all their intercourse with the wrld - & in cases of difficulty, never to suffer their spirits to rise - for said she, "if you rise, the wrld can & will rise higher than Bl.rs & take more advantage - and the only way for Bl.rs to gain & keep power over the world is to keep below them" - She often taught us to keep low, pray to God & put our trust in him for protection against our enemies, & said she "the faithful, fervent prayers of the righteous will prevail" - and she often called upon the Chh. and people to humble themselves before God & pray for his blessing & protection in times of trouble. This is & has been the constant practice of the Chh. here - for tho Bl.rs may feel strong in the advantages they have of the justice of their cause; yet they cannot & ought not to rely upon their own strength for defence - If the hand of God is not stretched out for their protection they will fail.

We believe it is right that Believers should use all the lawful means that Providence has put in their power to defend their just & lawful rights against cruel & designing men who hate the work of God, & would, if possible, destroy it out of the earth - and where the forces on which they rely can be employed in our favor & on the side of truth & justice, it seems right that we should avail ourselves of such advantages - and thus the less ungodly may be induced to contend with the more ungodly in our behalf. We suppose (at least we hope) that the Bl.rs in Ky. have counsel learned in the law, who understand the practice of law in that state much better than we do, & who, we hope, will be faithful to defend the rights of Bl.rs against the injustice of apostates & their coadjutors. But we have found by experience that however learned or skilful lawyers may be; yet unless they are made fully acquainted with the principles, nature & tendency of our institutions, & are fully apprized of the object & design of our united & consecrated interest, they are but poorly qualified to manage a suit for us. And we should suppose that no honest atty furnished with this knowledge, (unless compelled by the peculiar circumstances of the case,) would advise to appoint agents to act under that unconstitutional Act of the Ky. legislature with a view to defend the consecrated interest of the Society; because that act, and the laws by which we maintain

this interest are at pointed variance. We have, by a written contract, supported by the Const.tn of the United States & the free institutions of our country, devoted our property to certain purposes, clearly specified. But the Ky act speaks of "communities of people called Shakers, living together & holding their property in common." What more could our enemies desire than to establish the principle that the property of this Society is held in common? We disclaim the principle, as applied to us; nor do we know of any such people - The act itself is founded in falsehood - It is in fact a shameful violation against the free & liberal institutions of our country, as well as of the civil & religious rights of man, and it appears to us very unsafe for Bros to act under it; for by so doing they virtually admit its constitutionality, unless they reserve the right of protesting against the act in the ifsue. Why should we appoint agents to act under an unconstitutional law, in the defense of our constitutional rights, when the very object of that law is to deprive us of those rights? We hope however that your attornies understand their business & know their duty.

It appears to us that the act, upon investigation, must turn out to be a mere nullity. Agents are to be appointed by some body to defend some body's property! Who is to appoint them? and whose property are they to defend? We presume there are no Bros in Ky. who hold their property in common. If there are, let them appoint agents to defend it, if they chuse. But those who have consecrated their property & themselves to the service of God, can have nothing to do with that law, except to disclaim it. Their most obvious duty, we should think, would be to stay at home and mind their own business, and let those apostates & their lawyers manage their cause as they could, at their own expense - We presume the court would not proceed to trial without any defendants - and if no defendants are summoned by name, according to the universal practice of law, who is bound to appear? and what grounds have the court to proceed upon? We know of no law that gives any, in such case - Of course the plaintiffs must become liable for the costs - Bros who do not hold property in common cannot be made liable. If any court should venture to proceed in such a case, & decide in favor of the pltff. it must be at their own risk - and where are the costs & damages to come from? If executions are ifsued & property seized which belongs to the consecrated interest, the obvious course of the Trustees is to get out a replevin & take the property back - Then these apostates must be driven to the necessity of suing the Trustees, or abandon the cause - If they sue in such a case, we should suppose it would be very easy for the Trustees to prove no cause of action & obtain a nonsuit - Because they can prove that the community they represent, does not hold property in common - Nor does any individual (if a member of the Chh.) hold any property at all. If the above hasty remarks are useful to you, they will at least do no hurt.

We have noticed in the 4th § of the Ky act, this proviso - "Nothing in this act contained shall be so construed as to give any person the any right which he or she would not have had if this act had not passed; but such right shall depend upon, & be determined by the laws, covenants & usages of such society, & the general laws of the land &c." Now it is well known that the general laws of the land allow every individual a right to devote their property & services to whatever object or purpose they please - And if by a written contract they agree to devote both to a particular object & purpose, such contract is valid, not only by the general laws of the land, but also by a specific Art. of the U.S. const.tn (see Art. 1. Sec. 10.) The laws & usages of the United Society determine that every individual member of the consecrated body gives up all private claim & contracts to devote his property & services to certain purposes clearly specified & set forth in the contract - Then agreeable to this provision of the Ky act, ipso facto, it shall be so. Here appears a strong hold for Bros, in case they have appointed agents - In this section it would seem that the act nullified itself, & rendered it impossible for an apostate to obtain any thing by this law. Again, All property held by associated bodies, even admitting it

to be held in common, or by a corporation, is held subject to certain conditions – and if those conditions are violated, they are violated at the cost of the violator, & not of him who fulfils the conditions. If this were not the case, there would soon be an end to all corporate property, & even to property held in common. If the agents are able to prove that the violation of the conditions is entirely on the side of the withdrawing party, his claim is barred at once, even by this cloven-footed act. – But if that act, in any of its provisions, tends to impair the obligations of the Chh. Cov^t it is to be remembered that the strength of this Cov^t does not rest upon the laws of any individual state; but upon the Const^tn of the U.S. Art. 6. ℙ 2. "This Const^tn & the laws of the U.S. which shall be made in pursuance thereof &c. shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby; any thing in the Const^tn & laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding." You have them only to prove that the Ky act is contrary to the Const^tn of the U.S. and an appeal lies from any court which shall decide a case by that act, to the Courts of the U.S. – It would be better for Blues to spend half their property in defending the remainder than to submit to a decision which will virtually take the whole.

The strongest legal support to our Cov^t will be found in Art. 1. sec. 10. Const^tn U.S. "No state shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts." The moment any state law impairs the obligation of a contract, it violates the U.S. const^tn. And if any ~~state~~ court, acting under such law, should violate the Chh. Cov^t (which is a very sacred contract) or should construe it contrary to its plain & obvious meaning, it at once impairs the obligation of that contract. We have showed this clause of the Const^tn to some of the most noted & able lawyers in the U.S. as well as to judges & statesmen, and they uniformly declare it conclusive, as to the defense of all our Covenants. We very much doubt whether an appeal to the Const^tn of Ky would have half the weight of an appeal to the U.S. Cont^tn. If therefore these dirty causes should be decided against you, you will know where to carry your final appeal, in case the higher courts of Ky. decide against you. We did not learn from your letters on what grounds the Society at P.H. were proceeding in their defense, & should like to know – also whether you have able & faithful lawyers on whom you can depend. Lawyers love money, & will often rather take measures calculated for a lengthy process than for a short & conclusive decision, which is equally attainable. Why the Trustees should be driven to the necessity of suing for the recovery of the horse sold in the streets of Harrodsburg we cannot comprehend, unless it was to make a long process of an affair which in this state would have been very short. A writ of replevin from a judge of the court, delivered to a sheriff, here, would have soon brought the horse back; and then the opposite party must have sued the Trustees, & proved a legal right to take the horse, without a decision of court, or he must have abandoned his cause. This our brethren at Waterlist have tried. Having had property taken to answer a military fine, the Trustees got a replevin & took the property back. The militia officer who ordered the seizure, saw that a further prosecution of his claim would probably be attended with much cost & trouble, and the final decision doubtful, abandoned it, & the Trustees had no more difficulty about it. Whereas had they not taken this step, they would probably have been harrassed with such like demands & executions without end. I must now close my lengthy epistle. If you can gather any thing from it to strengthen the cause of the Chh. at P.H. it is at your service. The Chh. here feel some bearing about the issue of the matters in contest, & would be glad to know the result. The prayers of all are for your blessing & prosperity in these trials. The Ministry & Elders of the Chh. send their kind love & wish you to present it to the Ministry & Elders at P.H. It is a general time of health here. Accept my kind love & best wishes for your success, & be so kind as to favor us with an account of the result as soon as convenient – from your friend & fellow servant in the gospel of Christ.

Seth –

N.B. About the beginning of this month I addressed a packet enclosing Br. Constant's Deed; but but by some oversight a scrap of paper containing a few lines from him was left out – so I send it here, trusting it will still answer the purpose intended, which was to let the people at P.H. know that he had not forget them – Br C. is as steady & as good as ever. S

Eleazar Wright
Pleasant Hill
Ky

Smith

This Indenture made the twenty third day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred & seven between David Meacham ~~late one of the deacons & trustees of the temporalities~~ of the ~~Church at New Lebanon~~ Town of Canaan county of Columbia & state of New york of the first part, and Peter Pease and Constant Mosely of the county of Warren & state of Ohio of the second part. Whereas the said party of the first part is a member of the religious society or church of Believers in Christ established in the town of Canaan aforesaid and commonly known by the name of Shakers. And whereas the said party of the first part is seized in fee simple by virtue of five certain deeds or releases of lands executed to him by several different persons in the state of Ohio. That is to say one certain deed or release executed by Timothy Sewell of Warren county bearing date ~~~~ & conveying &c and another certain deed or release executed by Richard McNemar of S. Warren Co. bearing date the 21st day of May 1807. & conveying the N.E. q.r of said section, & another certain Deed or release executed by Solomon King ~~~~ &c &c. as by the said deeds or releases, reference being thereunto had may more fully appear: And whereas the said real tenements & premises in the aforesaid deeds & releases mentioned & described were purchased & paid for with monies belonging to the aforesaid society & for the joint use & benefit of the members thereof in the manner herein after expressed & are now in their actual possession & occupancy but the particular uses & trusts intended by the purchasers are not specified in the said deeds or releases & where as it is proper that the uses & purposes for which the said purchases were made should be clearly & explicitly ascertained & defined according to the true intent & meaning of the several parties interested therein. And Whereas by the covenant or constitution of the said society the management of their temporal estate & concerns, is committed to the care & direction of the Deacons of their Church for the time being in such manner & for such uses as are expressed in their said covenant or constitution subscribed by the members of the said Church as by the said covenant or constitution, reference being thereunto had, may also more fully appear And whereas the said parties of the second part have been duly elected & appoint

by the said society to receive a declaration in due form of law from the said party of the first part touching all & singular the premises aforesaid of the uses & purposes aforesaid for which the same are now held & intended forever hereafter to be held NOW therefore this Indenture witnesseth that the said party of the first part doth hereby acknowledge testify & declare that his name is made use of in the aforesaid several deeds or releases in trust for the joint use benifit & behoof of the members of the aforesaid society (whose names are subscribed to the aforesaid covenant) and to be & remain forever subject to the management control and disposition of the Deacons for the time being of the aforesaid church in the manner & for the purposes expressed in the aforesaid covenant or constitution & according to the true intent & meaning thereof & the said party of the first part, for himself his heirs & assigns doth hereby further declare & agree that it shall & may be lawful for the Deacons of the said church for the time being, from time to time to ask demand, receive & take for the uses & purposes aforesaid all & singular the rents issues & profits of all & every the tenements & premises aforesaid & to use all lawful ways & means in the name of the said party of the first part or of the heirs executors & administrators of the said party of the first part to secure & maintain the quiet & peaceable enjoyment of the said tenements & premises & every part thereof & to recover receive & take the rents issues & profits thereof for the uses & purposes aforesaid they the said Deacons for the time being saving him the said party of the first part, his heirs executors & admrs. harmless from all costs or damages that may accrue to him or them or any of them by reason of using his or their names as aforesaid. And the said party of the first part for himself his heirs executors & admrs. doth also covenant & agree with the said parties of the second part. their heirs executors Admrs and assigns. that it shall & may be lawful for the deacons of the aforesaid church for the time being & from time to time forever hereafter peaceably & quietly to have hold enjoy

control manage & dispose of all & singular the tenements & premises aforesaid, in the manner & for the uses & purposes aforesaid without any let molestation or hindrance of the said party of the first part his heirs or of any person claiming from by or under him, or by means of any act matter or thing done or committed or to be done or committed by the said party of the first part his heirs or assigns in any wise way touching or concerning the said tenements and premises ~~touching or concerning~~ And further that neither he the said party of the first part his heirs or assigns shall or will in any manner or at any time hinder impede or molest the Deacons of the said church for the time being in the pursuit & prosecution in his or their name or names, of any lawful means to ask demand, recover, receive and take the rents, issues & profits of the tenements & premises aforesaid or to secure & maintain the quiet & peaceable possession of the said tenements & premises & every part thereof in & to the said Deacons for the uses & purposes & under the conditions covenants & agreements aforesaid subject only to the aforesaid stipulations of indemnity against costs or damages. —— In witness whereof the said party of the first part has hereunto set his hand & seal on the day & in the year first above written.

David Osborn
Jas. Van Ingen } witnesses

David Meacham seal

State of New York
City of Albany } ss. Be it known that on the 23d day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred & seven before me James Van Ingen Notary Public duly appointed commissioned & sworn residing in the city of Albany came David Meacham to me known to be the person described in & who in my presence executed the preceding instrument or Declaration of trust & acknowledged that he had executed the same as his free & voluntary act & deed for the uses & purposes therein mentioned. In faith & testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name & affixed my seal of office on this day & in the year aforesaid.

Seal

Jas. Van Ingen Notary Public

David Meacham's
Declaration
Copied

Pleasant Hill Oct^r 18^th 31

Beloved Brother Eleazar

The following is a Brief from J. B. Thompson To Judge Bridges, before the decision of our Lincoln suite. — And as you have taken so active a part, and shewn so much interest in our prosperity, both without, & within, I thought perhaps, the perusal of this might be acceptable to you. — E. Cunningham has also wrote quite ably on the subject, — but it would be difficult for me to read it well enough to draw it off accurately. So I have concluded to omit that at present.

Ballance — Comp^t
ag^st
The Shaker Society Def^ts
} Chy. — Lincoln Ct. Court.

Under the reservation of the right of filing a brief in this Cause, extended as I understand, at the time of the trial, to the several Counsel of the parties, I take the Liberty of presenting a few remarks to the Hon^ble Judge, who has the Case under consideration.

That every man has the right of worshiping God according to the dictates of his own Conscience — And That any set, or number of people have the right of associating themselves together, for That purpose — under whatever faith (however absurd in the estimation of others) under whatever Church discipline or regulations they may adopt. — And with the promulgation of whatever may be their beliefs, feelings, rules &C — I presume are positions Too well supported by the Constitution & bill of rights to admit of dispute or question. — That the Society of people called Shakers, have been for many years, and yet are, a Sect regularly established (in Mercer County at Pleasant Hill) under their own rules of Church discipline, practising their own faith, and worshiping God according to the dictates of their own Conscience, is also a position, well established by the proofs in the Cause — The Idea That a Court of Chancery would ever take cognisance of, or pretend consider adjudicate upon any complaint, made against them on account of the alledged absurdity of their Creed, or the lack of Orthordoxy in their religious tenets, is too preposterous to be entertained for a moment. And all apprehension of That kind of charge or complaint, having the least weight whatever with this Court is discarded.

I conceive it can not be questioned, That under our Constitution, and form of Government, all free Men of full age, have not only the right of the open profession and unrestrained exercise of any religious faith or doctrine, — But that all who are Compos mentis, have an equally unquestionable right, of disposing of their labor, or their property in any manner, and under any regulations, which they believe will conduce to their comfort.

and that such dispositions of labor or property, when mad by Compact with others, is binding upon the parties making it, unless Superinduced or procured by fraudulent practises in procuring the instrument, on the part of the Contracting parties, alleged in the Bill and Satisfactorily proven by the evidence. — I contend that the Common law does not, and never did prohibit free men, from entering into or living under such a Compact as that of the Shakers — or from conveying or disposing of their labor or property, for the uses and purposes in that Covenant designated — The Statute of Mortmain, if it should be relied on — was done away by the revolution, as incompatible with our government, and it was with its gennes.

As to the claim or complaint of Mr. Ballance, knowing that it is settled by an agreement between the parties — I shall say nothing. — As regards the Compls. Gass & Banta — I am reluctantly constrained to consider them, as men disappointed in their objects of ambition, and aiming to mend their condition by attempting (in vain) to Stultify themselves — those Men it appears, were of sound mind and of mature full age before they joined the Society — That they lived in the Society, under the family or probationary Compact for years before the Covenant of dedication was entered into by them or any of the Society — and that Gass particularly was at the head of a family, and that after long experience in the society, due deliberation, and full knowledge on their part of the regulations of the association, they joined the other members of the Society in entering into the mutual, Covenant — Instead of those men being defrauded or seduced by others — they themselves, were leading members inducing others to join them in the Compact — Gass lead the Van for his Signature is the very first put to the Covenant. — — — They now seek to nullify and avoid, their Covenant most religously and Solemnly entered into — Is it Because they had embraced an unorthordox religion? — This Court is not constituted for the purpose of investigating religious creeds or weighing mens faith, There is no Orthodoxy known to our Constitution or Laws — with which to compare any creed. — There are no Scales or weights established by which to test any mans religion. — — — Have the Compls. been disappointed in their search for the Philosophers Stone? Have they failed to find a Heaven upon earth? — This Court may pity, but cannot relieve them — Viewing the institution as a religious concern, I feel perfectly confident that this Court will disclaim any right or inclination to interpere with it, but leave its members to work out their own salvation according to the dictates of their own consciences — and the purity and correctness of their religion to be judged of by the Lord God.

If we examine the institution and the Compact or Covenant by which the members are associated, in a Civil point of view — it must be taken as a mere article of partnery entered into by parties (in every sense Capable of contracting) for the appropriation and use of their property and labor, in that mode and under those restrictions & limitations which they themselves chose to create. — and I think the doctrine is fully established by the authorities referred to by my Coadjeutor in this cause, That the members of a firm have the right to Stipulate in whatever way they choose, as to the extent of interest each shall have the disposition of the Stock & proceeds — and in what way any member may withdraw from the firm — Gass & Banta, have themselves been mainly instrumental in forming this association, they have as before Stated, of their own free will, and in their proper senses, executed the Covenant with others in which they have Solemnly Stipulated, That upon a secession of any member, no account or retribution of Stock or account of labor should be called for. They have both lived under the Covenant conspicuous, (and as regards Gass) leading members, in the Church, for perhaps twenty years. — They have enjoyed all the happiness, secured by the Conscientious devotion to and practice of a religion, harmless and not to be despised to say the least of it — and to them no doubt the most happy because it was that of their choice.

But unfortunately for us — poor human nature it seems is never to be content, we are always investigating and aiming to ameliorate our condition, in temporal and in Spiritual matters. — Those two men, as well as others, it seems at last discovered, that they were not to be Deified upon earth. — They have Violated their Solemn Covenant themselves, They have Seceded from their brethren, carrying with them handsome and large donations, made by the abiding members, and yet not content with having abandoned their God and their Church, they Lucifer like, seek to distroy that heaven from which they have fallen. — They now complain to your honor, "that they have neither as much religion or Money as will satisfy them — And ask you to Supply them, by a decree directing and ordering the disruption and partition of that which was their Paradice, and yet is the Paradise of hundreds of their Brethren at Pleasant Hill. —

I am fully persuaded that your Honor cannot upon any principal of law or equity interfere and that you will respond to those men Gass &c. That they, as they had the legal right to do, have cast their own lot in this world — taken their own course for the world to come — That they must abide the first — and pursue the other in their own way and that their Shifting and Changing in matters of this kind, never will be interrupted or interfered with by this Court. —

Suppose I am mistaken in what I have said and your Honor were disposed to

entertain the complaint and grant relief, can you do it under the present State of case? — And what can be done? — There are several hundred contracting parties to this Covenant — all having Signed it — and all by its terms equally interested in the temporal affairs, arranged by it — There are not more then ten or a dozen of them parties to this Suit — where are the balance — Some fifty or a hundred have left the Society, Some are dead and some two or three hundred remain — who has attended to or litigated their rights in this cause? who has been authorised to do it? I say no one in a constitutional sense? — Courts of Justice must be open to all — and every party in interest must be a party in the Suit — and the legeslature can not exclude him. — I again enquire If this Covenant is to be nullified and held for nought, and the town and estate belonging to the Society is to be portioned among the members — who has represented, or who is to represent the members not parties to this Suit? — The absent dissenting members? — those resident & not parties? — and the infant or adult heirs of the deceased Covenant members? — and that there are many of each description — is evident from the record — and known even as a part of common history of the Country —

But we are told that the act of the legeslature providing a mode of suing, the Society embraces the case, and authorises the proceeding — I say not. That act in its terms applies to and provides for Cases of demands of Strangers against the Society — But as regards the Society themselves — The Covenant members — they are left to be regulated by their own rules and usages and the Common Law. See the act. — Knowing that my Coadjutor has presented in a clear point of view, the unconstitutionality of that act, in regard to its application to this cause — I will not trouble your Honor with any further remarks upon that head. — As to the indispensible necessity of all those interested being parties — I refer to a single case — M^c Connells ~~&~~ vs The trustees of Lexing in addition to those Cited by my Coadjutor 3 Mass 224.

Now Sir — not having the record before me — I have made the foregoing remarks merely from my recollection of the general features of this case. —

If I have blundered or mistated, you I know will excuse me — I have no expectation of casting additional light upon the subject — But I have been induced to attempt a cursory view of the cause, by not only the ordenary solicitude felt by a lawyer for his clients interest in an immeasurably weighty contest — but also by a full persuasion, That Should your Honor decree in favor of the Compl^s — the def^ts will be utterly unable to give security on an appeal for so large an amount of estate. — and that there will forthwith ensue a general Scramble — among all interested,

whether members or dessenters, for the possession of the property — and I have no doubt great devestation take place. On the other hand, access to the Court of Appeals is easy, nothing to be secured but cost — and altho the utmost confidence in your Honors correctness in Judgment, is entertained (by both sides) yet in so important a suit it is desirable by all, that the question should be settled by the highest tribunal known to the Law.

These considerations I present, hoping that if your Honor feel doubts upon the merits of the case they may have what weight they are entitled to.

Respectfully
J. B. Thompson.

Now Brother Eleazar.

I have drawen of the foregoing, (I think pretty correctly) according to the coppy, I donot know that it will be of any service to you, or any body else, hereafter, except a little amusement. however we thought we would keep the first coppy, together with the other Briefs, untill our suit is desided in the Court of Appeals, which we suppose will not be done untill next March, if then.

As to other suits in law, we have not any of much weight at present, and we hope we shall not have any more, untill we have time to take breath.

Good Brother you have many friends here, who think much of you, and often speak of you with feelings of love and esteem. Still bearing in mind your kind and faithful labours in this place, for all of which we feel much indebted.

We have lately been favoured with a generous, and very agreable visit from the good Ministry at Union Village, and we feel much the better of it yet, and we hope we always shall. — we believe their visit here, was a special blessing and has been attended with much good. and we donot know that there is one in the Society but what were well pleased with such a notice.

Brother Eleazar I thank you kindly for the little Books you sent by the Ministry to me, I was pleased with them, but in a special manner that you had not forgoten me. —— Now with this, please kind Brother to accept of my best love to yourself, and impart freely of the same, to all my good friends, according to your own good pleasure, please also to accept of the thanks and love of all those I live with in the same way. — So nomore at present but remain your constant friend and brother. — Fanewell, from — — — — — — — — Samuel.

N.B. Brother Eleazar, I have never been able as yet to find your little Hymn Book, I donot know that it ever will be found untill you come over here and hunt it up yourself. ah! that would be bringing about matters pretty well to my mind.

P.S. A few days after our Chancery suit was decided in Lincoln, Judge Bridges was in a private conversation with B. Rufus, and he observed, "that no respectable Court of Chancery in the United States, could disannul, or dissolve the Contract between the parties, or question the legality, or Constitutionality of the Covenant."

To Brother Elijah.
Union Village

A brief sketch of the opinion of the Honorable Judge of the Lincoln Circuit Court Kentucky. This was a suit in chancery brought by some apostate members from the Shaker society there were several positions taken by the different plaintiffs, those who had contributed property prayed for a decree in proportion to the amount vested including services those who put nothing in prayed for a bit of partition on the grounds of joint tenantcy alledging a breach of covenant on the part of the society The case was argued at the June term of the court but he declined giving his opinion till the August term which was as follows Gentlemen, in the case of Ballance and Al. vs. the Shaker Society= After having thoroughly examined all the evidence produced by the plaintiffs in this case there is a total want of support on plaintiffs part consequently the bill must fall. There is nothing even tending to shew that any improper conduct or treatment had been made use of by the defendants against the plaintiffs or that there was any thing like fraud or collusion used in obtaing the signature of plaintiffs to the covenant of 1814. but on the contrary abundance of proof showing that they were active influential men in bringing about said covenant that they were men of good common sense of mature age and that it was a little surprising to see the same men now engaged in trying to dissolve the society and disannul the covenant. To sum up the whole of the evidence in the case without giving his reasons at length he was compelled to dismiss the bill at plaintiffs cost

(210)

Ballance &c. vs. the
Shaker Society

Opinion of the Court

New Lebanon April 6th 1833.

Beloved Elder Eldridge,

Your letter of Feby 13th was duly recd March 4th You will perhaps say, Why did you not answer it sooner? Why to tell you the truth, I had two reasons. 1st I found so much to do after my return from the east, that I found no time. 2. I hardly knew what to say to it then; for my mind was so incumbered with many things, which were pressing upon it at home, and so confused & scattered with the labors of the winter past, that it took some time to get it regulated & settled to its proper standard. And even now I hardly know what to write. I do not know what objections any good Believer can have against signing the Covenant. If it is not sufficient, let the deficiencies be pointed out; perhaps the objections may be removed. But if it really needs amendment, let it be done in union. Why should we be disunited in such matters?

As to our Covenants, we have found no difficulty worth mentioning. If any one did not chuse to sign, we did not chuse he should; because we want none but free volunteers — such as count it a privilege to be enrolled with their brethren & sisters in the bonds of gospel union, determined to stand by each other in joy & sorrow, in health & sickness, in life & death. We want no constrained believers. No halting, vacillating, hesitating souls ought ever to come into the Church. Those who cannot become one with the Church in all things, ought to go where more license & latitude can be indulged. Those that cannot unite in such written bonds as are found necessary for the protection & security of the privileges of the Church, do not belong to it, and therefore ought not to stay in it. "Let them take up their baggage and go."

As to perfect uniformity, verbatim & literatim & punctuatim, it cannot be expected — and if it could, the future increase of the gospel must necessarily dictate amendments, and perhaps essential verbal alterations. We have the essential matters, as to substance, comprised in our Covenant, a copy of which you have. A few amendments, such as I sent you, were made, and the Covenant was executed in the Church here in April 1830. Copies were sent to the eastern Churches, and were executed, as I understand, without any objection. Indeed I was repeatedly told when at the east last winter, that they esteemed it a privilege to receive any counsel or order — to adopt any practice, or to sign any instrument sent from or recommended by the Church at N. Lebanon, and that it was their labor to be like the Church here, in all things. All the alterations that were found necessary in the Covenants of the eastern Churches, were the names of the places. In the preliminary Remarks which were prefixed to our Covenant, explanatory of its principls, & first rise, and which were copied into their Covenants, were added the names of the first Ministers & Trustees under whose ministration each particular Church was first established. But in the Covenants of the families, whose temporal interest is disconnected with that of the Church, we omitted the 5th & 6th Sections of the III Article, because all the landed property in the Society is held by the Trustees of the Church, and therefore those Sections were not necessary in their Covenants, as their Trustees hold no real estate.

The Covenant was executed by the Elders, Deacons & all the brethren & sisters in the Church, Apl. 27th. The Elders put their names down first, and the Trustees last. It was done in the Deacons' room in the house. Two witnesses were called on the occasion, of which Rich. Bushnell of the North family was one, and myself the other. The brethren took the lead & came in a few at a time, and put down their names on the right hand side of the page; and when they had got through, the sisters came in like manner, & put down their names on the left hand side, opposite the brethren; each one, as soon as his or her name was down & acknowledged, withdrew & made room for others, till all their names were down. The whole business was soon performed, calmly & deliberately, without any objections or hesitation, excepting that some of the aged brethren & sisters who, on account of a trembling hand, or a long disuse of the pen, felt unable to write their own names, & therefore requested some of the younger ones to write for them, they at the same time acknowledging their signatures, & that they had done it freely & of their own choice. After the Covenant was executed, it was considered a matter of importance that the approval of the Ministry should also be signed. Accordingly the Ministry signed their approval on a blank page opposite the first page of the Covenant in the following words, viz.

The undersigned, the Ministry of the United Society at New Lebanon, having duly examined the following Covenant which has been recommended to the Society, and agreed to & regularly signed & sealed by the members of the Church, do hereby approve & recommend the same as a general Covenant or Constitution for the Church at New Lebanon and Watervliet, and also for the United Society in all its branches, wherever & whenever they may be prepared to adopt it. This was signed by Ebenezer Bishop, Rufus Bishop, Mary A. Sanford & Asenath Clark. — The Elders & Trustees having signed the Covenant as members, is considered sufficient ~~approval~~ on their part. This we think sufficient to establish the authority of the Covenant before any Court in any part of the United States. It is thought that, for any legal purpose, the Ministry of each Society are competant to approve & recommend the Covenant to the people under their care. But we think it would be proper for the Ministry at Union Village to recommend it to all the Societies in Ohio & Ky. in the same manner as our Ministry have recommended it to all. It is not necessary for the Min'y to sign every copy of the like Covenant that shall be written for the separate families not belonging to the Church; but only the Covenants of the Church. But on each family Covenant that has rec'd the approbation of the Ministry, should be written, Approved by the Ministry. As to a public seal, we have not yet felt the necessity of providing one. If it should be found to be a matter of importance, we shall probably have one in time. It would doubtless be a convenient thing, and might perhaps give more force to the Covenant.

Brother Rufus has requested me to return you his kind thanks for your very welcome letter to him. He was much pleased pleased with its contents; the freedom of intelligence, the store of kind love, & especially your birthday poem, gave him much satisfaction. He has given it a free circulation in these parts, & intends to extend it the eastern Churches where the Ministry expect to visit this season. Br. R. & the rest of our beloved Ministry send their kind love to you & Elder Sparhawk, and wish you to convey the same to Elder Solomon & the Ministry with him, and to make as free use of it as if it were your own. Accept also my kind love with theirs, and use the same freedom with it, as far as you think proper. Accept also my thanks for the Hymns. & by request I must include N.Y.'s thanks & love, & also the Elder Sisterhood. Seth.

for those sent them — to be conveyed to E. Sparhawk, Eldress Salome & Sister Eunice.

Confidential. Respecting the "General Rules &c." contained in the little printed pamphlet, I hardly know what to say— I do not know what kind of Believers you have at Watervliet. If, like an honest plain-hearted Believer, I must tell what I think, then I must say, I think the interest of the Society would be in a safer situation without any Covenant at all, than to depend on the safety of that instrument as a Covenant. Because I consider that the very first Article is calculated to the intention of nullify all the rest, and leave the members at full liberty to do as they please. Had that Article, with a little variation, been incorporated into the preamble, it might have answered the purpose for which I suppose it was intended. But as it now stands, I think it must, in the event of a lawsuit, defeat its own object.

It is a truth, that every man has an inalienable right to believe according to his own conviction, & to worship God according to his own faith; and every woman has the same right. This right is indisputable. Therefore we, being convinced that the faith we have received in the testimony of Christ's 2d. appearing, is the only true faith, and having embraced this faith, with a determination to maintain its principles, have covenanted so and so, according to that faith. But to enter into a solemn contract, & confirm it by a legal instrument under hand & seal, the very first Article of which is, that "We mutually agree, that we & each of us, male & female, have an undoubted & inalienable right, &c. of chusing our own religion, and of giving or withholding our property or services for the support of it, as we may think proper, &c. is (I think) to all intents & purposes, giving full latitude to every member signing the contract, to act in all these things just as he may chuse, even if it be to change his religion every week, or to demand his consecrated property whenever he may think proper, and still claim his union & his equal right to all the common privileges enjoyed by other members." And I think this 1st. Article will sanction his claim, and that a clause in the 7th Article will confirm it, whatever may be said in the following article to the contrary. [*See p. 5. line 10th to 18th] I have no idea that this was the intention of the Covenant; nor do I believe that this such a thought ever entered E. Benjamin's heart, if he did draft the Articles. But crafty lawyers will doubtless be ready enough to put this construction upon it, and will endeavor to prove it by the very words of the instrument itself; and in that case who can prove to the contrary? Had the piece been drawn up merely as an exposition of the established practices of the Society, it might have passed very well; but as a legal instrument, intended to protect the rights of the Society in in a court of judicature, I think it a dangerous thing, & hope no lawyer will ever see it — I think if every copy of it could be secured, original & all, and committed to the flames, the rights of the Society would be in a safer condition. I have not shown it to any one, excepting the Ministry & Br. Calvin.

Dear Brother, what I have written is not intended to cast any blame upon any one; but to discharge a friendly duty and I hope it will bring no additional burden upon you; for I believe you have had your full share of burden in these matters; and I sincerely hope this free expression of my sentiments, instead of bringing a burden, will rather afford you some relearsement. As my calling is rather of a public nature, designed to be instrumental in assisting the Society at large, I cannot but feel the interest of Believers, wherever located, to be my interest; and I earnestly desire that every Society may be safely protected from the malicious fangs of apostates & their rapacious & unprincipled advocates.

I ought to inform you that we have a separate Covenant for the junior order of Believers, which, tho founded on the principles of the Church & family Covenants, is quite a different instrument, and adapted to their situation. This seemed necessary; because they are unprepared to sign the uniform Covenant. This was framed for our North family several years ago, and has been adopted into the junior orders of the eastern Societies.

Seth.

P.S. April 8th. I had intended to have given you a little sketch of my journey to the eastward, but I find I have not room. I left N.L. Nov. 19th and returned Feby 21st. During my absence I visited Harvard & Shirley in Mass. and Canterbury & Enfield in N.H. I found much to do in my absence, which kept me constantly busy. My main business was to regulate their Schools, and introduce such improvements as we have made in our schools. To these schools, in addition to the usual school children, most of the young people attended while I was there. At Canterbury I instructed nearly 100, including both sexes — At Enfield upwards of 100 — At Harvard & Shirley not so many.

Our Ministry expect to start the last week in May or first in June, & return the forepart of July. You will doubtless shew this letter to Elder Solomon, to whom I send my love.

Note. Isaac Crouch deceased March 30th in the Church.

N. Lebanon N.Y. 25
April 9th 1833

Eleazar Wright,
Watervliet, near Dayton,
Montgomery Co. Ohio.

Single.

1226

To the Ministry Elders Trustees and all whom it may concern in the Church & Society at Union Village, in the state of Ohio.

Beloved Friends.

In compliance with a special request from the Ministry and others of our friends at Union Village, for the agency of some suitable person from hence properly authorised to afford you some assistance in regulating the temporal concerns of the Church and society there, the Ministry and Elders of the Church at New Lebanon have deemed it expedient and necessary to commission and send you Daniel J. Hawkins and Stephen Wells the bearers of this epistle, trusting they will be able to afford you some suitable relief in the present exigence of your temporal affairs. We must however, apprise you that they are not sent as great learned worldly wise men able to govern apostates and make the wicked do justly & love righteousness, but we can recommend them as plain honest dealing Brethren who have had many years experience in their respective families, and have proved themselves faithful stewards and true to the cause of the gospel, and in whom we place confidence. They go commissioned with the love & blessings of the Church, and the best wishes of the society in this place and at Waterloliet. and with the confident hope that their assistance in union with you will be able to accomplish your wishes and meet the general approbation of the society both there and here.

As the respective families to which these brethren belong have through faith and love to the way of God, and readiness to afford help to their Western Brethren in affliction, freely submitted to this sacrifice in parting for a season with their principal trustees on whom they place much dependance, we hope that when they have accomplished their mission and done their duty they may return in peace, and be able to render a prosperous account of their labors.

By order of the Ministry of the church

New Lebanon Church
November 15th 1825

Seth. Y. Wells - Secretary

(252)

B. 5.5.9. 1833.

Elder Eleazar W.

Waterbliet,

Ohio.

By Elder Isaacs

New Lebanon Jany 7th 1834.

Dearly beloved Elder Eleazar,

Yours of several dates from Novr 20th to Decr 4th was receivd. on the 20th ult. The printed sheets came to hand last evening, which I have not yet found time to examine. The letter was very satisfying, and opens a fair field for us to proceed as soon as time & circumstances will permit. The genuine love & harmony of feelings exhibited in it afforded us much consolation, and an additional confirmation of the many proofs already received, that we have faithful brethren in the west who are ready to unite heart & hands with us in strengthening the bands of gospel union, and by giving us a fair view of circumstances, open a way for the concentration of our united efforts in building up the cause of Zion and guarding and strengthening the walls & battlements of the City against the inroads of foreign & domestic enemies. But I cannot, at present, give any further answer to your letter relative to the concerns of the general Covenant; because I have no time at now to go into that labor. I am preparing for a journey to Enfield (Conn.) and expect to be absent 3 or 4 weeks. The Ministry are also preparing to go to Watervliet, and will probably be gone quite as long. We had occasion a few weeks ago to send a packet to Elder Benj.n and as it was a favorable opportunity, I inclosed a Note to him, and not knowing that I should have occasion to write to you soon, I requested him, in case he should write soon, to forward the substance of the Note to you. But as it is uncertain whether he has written to you we have thot it best to give you the same information, which is as follows:

We have finally concluded to print those chapters from the Manifesto which were prepared for the press sometime ago. The occasion is this — our other Books are nearly gone, and the Elders of the N.t say they have nothing of the kind to answer the calls of serious enquirers who ask for our Books — and at present we cannot think of reprinting any large work; and those chapters contain useful information and sound reasoning on important practical subjects. We do not expect to print it before spring; and if you have any further amendments which you think may be useful, we would like to receive them by the month of March, or by the first of April at farthest. You may perhaps recollect that we proposed to print those chapters included between the pages 284 & 340, but there is a feeling to add the preceding chapter, beginning at p. 270. If we do that, as it is not so suitable to commence with as that at page 284, we propose to insert it between the 9th & 10th chapters, at page 325. —— I do not know what Br. J. D.'s motive was in confining himself to the expression the regeneration, in his remarks on that subject — "The generation not of Christ." I can see no necessity of the article in that place — Generation is a word well understood without prefixing the article to it. What do you think? I am fully aware that the words of Christ "They who have followed (or rather, who shall have followed) me in the regeneration", are very properly expressed;

but if I were to write on this latter subject, I should not consider it improper to adopt as a title Regeneration not of Adam; tho in pursuing the discourse it might often be very proper to use the term the regeneration, and I admit that in some places br. John uses the expression the generation with propriety; but in many places, and especially in the running title of this chapter, it appears stiff and awkward.

I perceive that br. John, with all his knowledge of the original languages, tho a profound reasoner, was quite unskilful in English composition - Many of his sentences are spun out to an intolerable length, and often so intermixed with parenthetical adjuncts that the sense, in many instances, is left very obscure to common readers. I am far from wishing to depreciate the value of the Book by these remarks, for I consider the matter important & highly valuable; but I must say, I think his composition, in many places, needs considerable amendment - But I must quit the subject, or you will begin to think it more natural, as well as more easy for me to find faults than to mend them - I shall however calculate to hear from you on this subject.

It is at present a general time of health in these parts, excepting colds, which have been quite prevalent of late, owing probably to the sudden changes in the weather which prevaild in the months of November & December; but since the steady cold weather commenced they seem to be taking leave of us - Probably you have not yet received information of the decease of our good Elder John Farrington who left us the 12th. of December. Since he resigned his eldership in April last, he has appeared to feel very comfortable & peaceable in spirit, and was always ready to unite & bless & build up every gift of God that came along, so that he continued to have the love & blessing of all, both old & young. His zeal in the worship of God was unabated - Sabbath Dec. 1st he attended meeting as usual - went forth & labored with as much life & activity as any of the youth in the assembly - Monday 2. while at dinner with the family he was suddenly struck with a paralytic shock down his right side which entirely deprived him of the use of his limbs on that side & also of his speech; but his senses seemed to remain clear, and he continued calm & patient, and still showed signs of a peaceable & comfortable spirit to the brethren & sisters around him, but continued quite helpless till Thursday the 12th. about 3 O'clock A.M. when he breathed his last without a struggle or a groan - aged 73 years & 2 months lacking a day. The Friday before he was taken down, he observed to some of the brethren that he had been in a labor on the subject of his departure, and that he had made up his mind to go, and he believed he should go soon. His funeral was attended by the Elders & some of the members of all the families throughout the County

and a considerable number from Hancock - A calm & peaceable feeling seemed to overspread the whole assembly, and the impression which was very sensibly felt was, "& Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Our Ministry have requested me to communicate their kind love to you and all concerned, desiring the blessing & prosperity of all the faithful - & Brother Rufus also desires me to return you his special thanks for your very interesting letter to him - The freedom & openness of your communications have greatly increased his love to the writer, altho he loved him a great heap before - You will also please to accept & communicate with equal freedom & to the same extent, the love of your loving friend & fellow labourer, the Church Scribe, Seth

N.B. Oportet mihi respondere vos interrogationes scripti transversa in rubeo atramento, quod licet.

I have never seen the act alluded to, of course I know not the names of the commissioners, nor who is agent of the company &c. It would not be consistent with the 2. section of the 2. Art. of our Covenant, nor indeed with the spirit of any part of it, nor with any law of Zion for our Trustee to hold any office under the laws of the state, beyond the superintendence of his own brethren in their employment on the highway, or something of the kind which the laws oblige them to do for the public benefit; for in such cases the brethren do not feel willing to work under the control of an agent or superintendent who is of the world, if they can avoid it - hence application is made at the annual town meeting & one of the trustees or some other brother is named and appointed for that purpose. No Ministry can have any authority to control the acts of the trusteeship beyond the limits of the authority given the trustee by said Ministry - No man can give authority to another which he does not possess himself.

Should the president of the U.S. appoint an agent to act in any official capacity under the government of the U.S. and this same agent should afterwards engage with a foreign government to act in a similar capacity under that foreign government. The president could not control the acts of this agent in his foreign employment; tho he could dismiss him from his office & trust under the U.S. government - See Matt. 6. 24. Luke 12. 14. John 18. 36.

About this stepping & hopping & jumping, and this movement of the stars & planets from east to west, I can say no more at present than merely to remark that the wind of the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and we can neither let nor hinder it, and you know that its operations are generally contrary to nature, therefore it need not surprise you if, while the motion of the natural heavens tends westward, the spiritual should so frequently take an opposite direction.

Jany 10th Various important engagements necessary to be accomplished previous to my journey, have occasioned the delay & completion of this letter till now - but it must go on to day - Noah Wheaton deceased this morning at half past 4 oclk. in the 90th year of his age -

Nov 5th 1850

11th Day

25

Eleazar Wright,

Waterviet, near Dayton

Montgomery Co. Ohio.

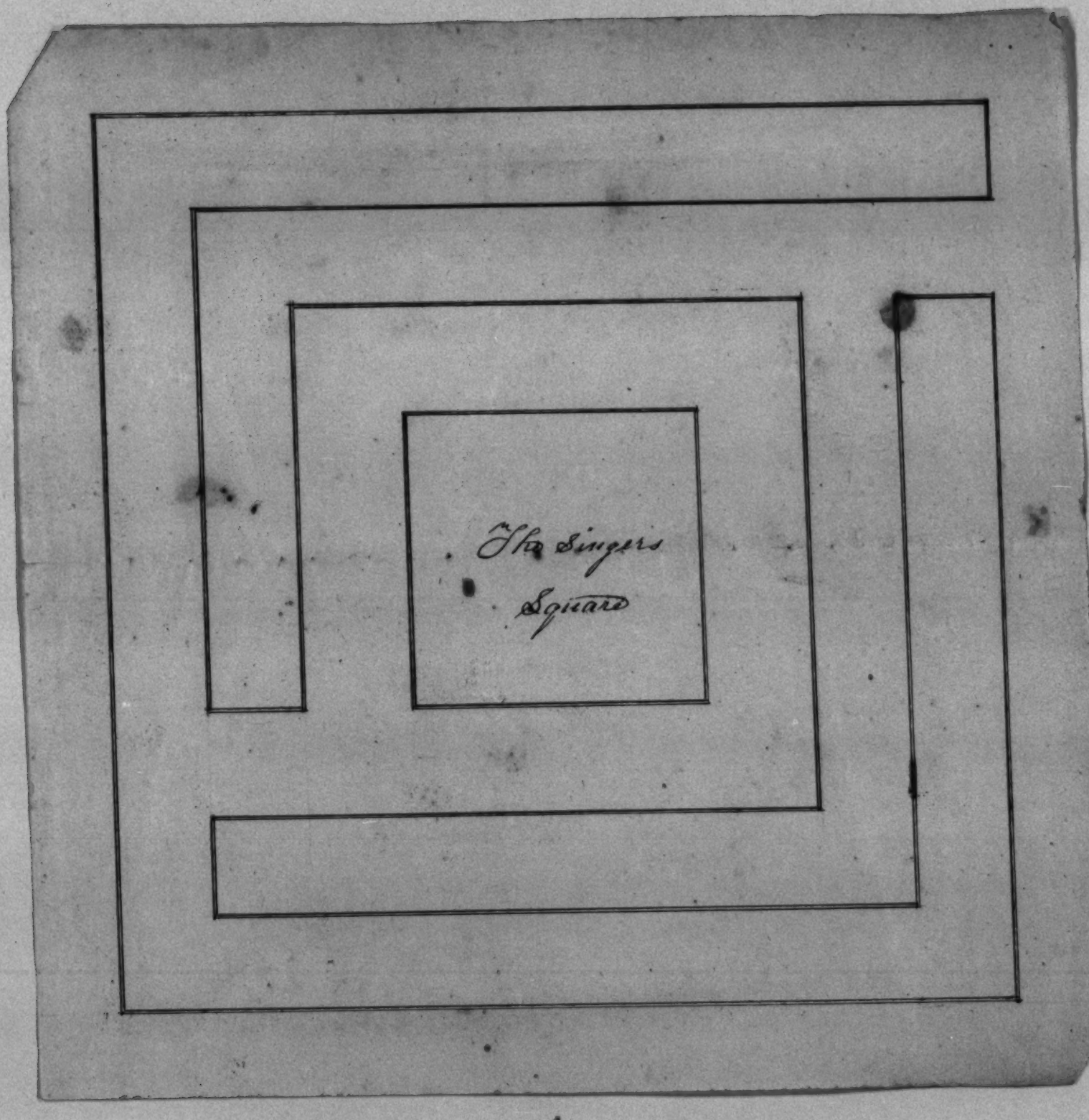
Single.

[273]

Be it remembered that on the [illegible] day of [illegible] in the year 1831.
undersigned constituting the Ministry of the United Society of people called [illegible]
on Village in the county of Warren and State of Ohio by and with the advice &
consent of the Elders and also the general approbation of the members of said
have and do by these presents appoint and ordain Henry Ballentine & Itha
n to the office of Trustees of the temporalities of said Society, in the room
Lewis Valentine & Daniel Boyd resigned; which said Lewis & Daniel
r Pease and John Wallace two of the original trustees of the Soc. Society.
rmore That the appointment and ordination of Nathan Sharp to the same
the same is hereby renewed, ratified & confirmed according to the present im-
rules & regulations of said Society, in conformity to which and by virtue of the
uthority thereby vested in us, constituting and installing, ratifying & confirming
said said Nathan Sharp Henry Ballentine & Ithamar Johnson the present
tees of the temporal interests of the Church of said Society in as full and ample
anner, to the same extent and with the same power & authority that was conferred
the said Peter Pease, John Wallace & Nathan Sharp by the original covenant of
Society bearing date January 15th 1812 and also renewed & confirmed by a subse
covenant bearing date December 31. 1829. and which has heretofore been
& exercised by the trustees of the said society from time to time in the manage
t of the temporal affairs of said Society.

ne at Union Village on the day, month & year first above written.

Memorandum
of
Trustee appointment


The Singers
Square